



CENTER FOR VOCATION
AND SERVANT LEADERSHIP

SETON HALL UNIVERSITY

**PRAXIS PROGRAM OF THE ADVANCED SEMINAR ON MISSION
5TH ANNUAL SUMMER PROGRAM
PARIS, FRANCE**

SPONSORED BY THE CENTER FOR VOCATION AND SERVANT LEADERSHIP AND THE CENTER FOR CATHOLIC STUDIES

***WORKSHOP: REFLECTING ON PRAXIS AND
THE UNIVERSITY***

May 22, 23, 24 at St. Jean de Passy Ecole

Our reflections on Praxis and the University will be framed by Lonergan's questions for educators in the first four chapters of *Topics in Education*. Faculty will have the opportunity to reflect on their work and continue the discussion that has become foundational to the meaning of the University's mission, approached as the intellectual conversion/transformation that occurs here, with faculty and administrators as "the carriers of meaning."

In the Praxis Program we seek processes that support healing and creating, and the development of fruitful courses of action. We will explore how healing and creating are the result of the dynamic intersection of GEM and the presence of God's Spirit dwelling in our interiority. We will also examine the role of imagination as a pathway of the Spirit in our reflections on the topic.

Workshop Schedule and Assignments

"To operate on the level of our day is to apply the best available knowledge and the most efficient techniques to coordinated group action." (*Method in Theology*, 367)

Reading Assignment: Lonergan, *Topics in Education*, Chapters 1-4; Lonergan, *A Third Collection*, "Healing and Creating in History;" Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 235-244.

Guiding Questions and Statements from Lonergan; Discussion Questions from Praxis participants.

Workshop Objective: to consider Lonergan's questions for education and their significance for the university and our work in the Praxis Program.

Participant Assignment Instructions:

- 4 Teams of 2 participants handle each statement and question for 1 hour, two each day, Wednesday and Thursday 10 – Noon.
- In your time, explore the significance of Lonergan's guiding questions, their significance in university education and in your disciplines, and include strategies for educators. Lead a discussion period on the topic; a discussion question has been provided. Use examples from your disciplines. (15 min. your topic; 45 min. for discussion)
- Highlight the use of GEM, Functional Specialties, specific notions (progress, decline, redemption) that promote healing and creating and a **fruitful course of action**, i.e., how do we do this here and now?
- Use the readings as reference. It is not necessary to teach the material per se. Be prepared with your reading.
- Recap and Final Report: Josephine DeVito

May 22, Wednesday

10 – 11 am – Mary Ellen Roberts and Marisa Case

Question 1: Lonergan's guiding questions:

What are the different levels of integration of the notion of the human good and consequently, what is the specific good that education, at the present time, has to have in mind? (Topics, 24)

How do you tie a philosophy to so particular a notion as our milieu? How do you bring the notion of the good down to the level of concrete living? (Topics, 25)

Discussion Question: We are moving towards answering Lonergan's question: "How do you bring the notion of the 'good' down to the level of concrete living?" What are your thoughts? (J.DeVito)

11 am – Noon – Wally Kennedy and Anthony Haynor

Question 2: Lonergan's guiding question and statement:

How do you derive a notion of the good that enables you to see that, although this is an essential good, it is not all that we are aiming at in our education? That is the fundamental problem. (Topics, 26-27)

The analysis of the good, of course, makes it obvious why we want a Catholic education. Our answer to the problem of evil will influence our education in all its aspects, because it will influence our notion of the good. (Topics, 69)

Discussion Questions: 1.) As there is an invariant structure to the human good, is there an invariant structure to a philosophy of education that should not change from age to age? (W Kennedy). 2.) Lonergan identifies progress, decline and redemption as the tri-polar dialectic of human history. Since redemption restores the order destroyed by sin and bias, should a Catholic university differentiate itself from secular institutions by incorporating redemption into its educational philosophy? (I DeMasi)

Afternoon 1 – 3 pm: Daily Reflection

May 23, Thursday

10- 11 am – Lisa Rose Wiles and Maureen Byrnes

Question 3: Lonergan's guiding statement and question:

Even philosophy can be applied; historical consciousness emerges when there is grasped the relevance of intelligence and wisdom to the whole of human life. (Topics, 76)

Are we to seek an integration of the human good on the level of historical consciousness, with the acknowledgment of man's responsibility for the human situation? If so, how are we to go about it? These are the fundamental questions for a philosophy of education today. There is a need for a philosophy that is on the level of our time, a philosophy that is concrete, existential, genetic, historical, a 'philosophy of....,' and Catholic. (Topics, 78)

Discussion question: If faith is the fundamental answer to the problem of sin, how do we set the aim of education to inspire a culture that equally incorporates faith and reason, rather than emphasizing reason alone? (I.DeMasi)

11 am – Noon – Doreen Stiskal and Matthew Graziano

Statement 4: Lonergan's statements:

*Finally, with regard to the philosophy of education itself, the fundamental problem is the horizon of the educationalist—of the person or group that has the power and the money, that runs the bureaucracy, that makes the decisions – **and the horizon of the teacher**. Insofar as their horizons are insufficiently enlarged, there will be difficulties all along the line. So the genuine function of a philosophy of education is to bring the horizon of the educationalist to the point where he is not living in some private world of educationalists, but in the universe of being. (Topics, 106) (bold added)*

Development depends upon, and is measured by.....the organization of one's operations, their reach, their implications, the orientation of one's living, of one's concern. Development retains all that was had before and adds to it, and it can add to it enormously. It eliminates previous evils by finding a higher integration in which the problems solve themselves. It finds this higher integration by working, not at the periphery but at the root, at the Sorge, at the concern, and by effecting the shift from the concern that is all too human to the spiritual aspiration of man that has its fundamental and first appearance in the pure desire to know that grounds the intellectual pattern of experience and sets the standards for one's morality. (Topics, 92)

Discussion Question: 1.) Praxis is the bridge between knowing and doing. What should this higher integration look like at SHU and in your discipline? 2.) What is the root/concern that effects the shift from the human to the spiritual? 3.) The Praxis Program is concerned with the horizon of the teacher. How can this program specifically support the development of this higher integration?

Afternoon 1 – 3 pm: Daily Reflection

May 24, Friday

10 am – 12 Noon

- Workshop Highlights – Josephine DeVito; Discussion – Linda Ulak and Mary Pat Wall – takeaways
- Praxis Program Highlights – Beth Bloom – Conclusions and Pedagogical Highlights
- Brainstorming for the Future of Praxis
 - Fall 2019 to Spring 2020 – Content and Direction?
 - Satellite program for IHS Campus
 - Communications?
 - Other

Afternoon 2 - 4 pm - Daily Reflection Wrap up